

Subject: Education

Background: Building support and understanding of the need for restoration of the ecosystem is critical to the success of these efforts. Many of the concepts in habitat restoration are new and innovative, and the public needs to understand them before they will support these new ideas. An education program would help the public understand the problems, would highlight the need to protect and restore the ecosystem, and would increase the acceptance of innovative restoration techniques. Education efforts need to be simple, understandable, and make a personal connection. This may cause individuals, and ultimately communities, to become active participants in local protection and/or restoration efforts. Should this end result be achieved, it will improve CALFED's interactions with communities and local watershed groups.

There are several types of appropriate educational activities:

1. Mass media tools such as billboards, radio and television advertisements, exhibits at museums and public offices, and newspaper ads all reach a broad segment of the general population. A general public education program could be developed using these tools.
2. Adopt-a-Stream programs provide opportunities for local citizens and communities to get involved in protecting and enhancing local natural resources. Not only do these programs provide great educational benefits to both children and adults, they also provide an understanding of the resource management decisions faced by the agencies. Adopt-a-Stream programs may evolve into watershed conservancies if given the financial resources and encouragement to do so.
3. There may be a shortage of well-qualified personnel available to work at the grass roots level to implement the many restoration projects funded through Category III or identified as part of CALFED's Ecosystem Restoration Program Plan. In many cases, the actual restoration work is envisioned to be completed by non-agency personnel. In order to develop a well-qualified workforce, it is appropriate to develop and implement a training program targeted at habitat restoration technicians who will work with local groups and conservancies.
4. As the ecosystem restoration field continues to grow, there will be a need to recruit skilled high school and college graduates. Hands-on experience through internships and mentoring programs will provide these students with an insight into this type of work and help guide their career choice. Internship and mentoring programs may be overseen by federal or state resource agencies, non-profit groups, or local agencies such as Resource Conservation Districts.

Proposed Action: Provide a focused grant for educational programs related to the Bay-Delta ecosystem. Appropriate types of educational programs include mass media, Adopt-a-Stream, habitat restoration training, internships, and mentoring.

Geographic Area: Throughout the Sacramento River watershed, San Joaquin River watershed, Delta, Suisun Bay, and North Delta.

Recommended Funding: \$300,000

Coordination: A criterion for selecting proposals to be funded is that they include coordination with any local conservancy, public education group, or environmental group which has existing public education programs in place. It is also appropriate to coordinate with the programs of the Sacramento River Discovery Center and Delta Science Center. This funding is not intended to duplicate existing programs, but to fill in the gaps.

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